

The Time Has Come For Modern Trains

(Editorial)

"Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come."

—Victor Hugo, 1852

The idea of modern rail passenger transportation is an idea whose time has come.

An examination of just a few recent news items will convince the reader that the time is indeed at hand.

Item: A Harris poll, sponsored by Amtrak, clearly states that the public wants modern rail transportation and will support government financial assistance to bring it about.

Item: Starting Feb. 6, passengers checking through any of the 2,800 passenger gates of America's air carriers come under security of an armed guard. For many, the hassel of getting aboard an aircraft would not be worthwhile if a viable alternative existed.

Item: An energy crisis is developing. The automobile achieves about 26 passenger miles per gallon of fuel. The Boeing 747 gets little more than 20 passenger miles per gallon of fuel. In contrast, trains achieve about 200 passenger miles per gallon of fuel.

Item: The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed gasoline rationing for the Los Angeles Area, as one way to help achieve better air quality there.

Item: Trains are getting better all the time. Despite the many shortcomings, Amtrak has proven to be a move in the right direction, and it continues to improve rail passenger service.

Item: Claude S. Brinegar, new Secretary of Transportation, indicated that the Administration is still pushing hard to tap the Highway Trust Fund for urban mass transit projects. "Modern, Federally-supported highways have made our cities accessible, but too many cars trying to use these highways have made the cities, as a factual matter, inaccessible just at the times most of us need the accessibility," he told a Senate committee on February 7.

Item: Governor Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania is considering sponsorship of a proposal which would utilize tolls from the



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Pennsylvania Turnpike for financing mass transit facilities. (A new rail line almost paralleling the turnpike, called the Keystone Corridor, was proposed several years ago.)

Item: Chicago city council has voted to tax \$10 million from the motor fuel tax funds to aid the financially troubled Chicago Transit Authority.

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Planners and dreamers tell us that entirely new modes of transportation are on the way and therefore, we should not return to rail transportation.

They fail to realize that future modes, such as tracked air

Scrapping of Britian's Hovertrain has been announced by Aerospace Minister Michael Heseltine. "No one has a use for" the train that was designed to run on elevated tracks at up to 300 m.p.h. The British government has spent around \$12 million developing a prototype and building a mile-long experimental track. Engineers had claimed the Hovertrain could revolutionize intercity travel. They said the cost of the track, estimated at about \$6 million, was less than for highways or normal railroads.

cushion vehicles are a long way in the future, but the rails are here now, and we need rail transportation now.

Frank T. Richardson, chairman of the Research and Development Committee of the Morris County, NJ, Board of Public Transportation, in testimony before a Senate Committee, recently put the matter in perspective: "Planners, given the opportunity, can dream up almost anything to appeal to our hopes for better transportation, but translating some of these dreams to reality is very difficult, if not impossible, under present technology."

Modern rail transportation, as demonstrated by New Jersey's famous Lindenwold Line or by San Francisco's BART (and to some degree by the Metroliner) is possible now. It is possible economically and technically. It is an idea whose time has arrived. Let's tell our political leaders we want it and we want it now!

A proposed new law, the "Essential Rail Services Act of 1973," calling for acquisition of rail track and roadbed by a "Northeast Rail Line Corporation," has been introduced in the U.S. Senate. The bill also provides for vastly improved maintenance of rail rights-of-way in all parts of the country.

Amtrak Will Appeal 'Nancy Hanks' Case To U.S. Supreme Court

Lawyers for Amtrak have indicated they will join the Southern Railroad in an appeal of the Nancy Hanks Case, in order to prevent individuals and consumer groups from filing suit against Amtrak and railroads for violations of the Amtrak Act.

Individuals and consumer groups won a victory in the Federal Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on January 10, when the court ruled that NARP could sue to enforce the Act.

The case began in April, 1971, when the Southern Railway System discontinued the "Nancy Hanks" passenger trains between Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia. NARP filed suit, claiming that the discontinuance was unlawful under the Amtrak Act.

The Federal District Court dismissed NARP's complaint, ruling that only the attorney general of the United States was empowered to bring suit to enforce the act. Subsequent pleas to the attorney general were ignored.

Amtrak argued before the Court of Appeals that railroad

passengers were ^{not} the intended beneficiaries of the Amtrak Act. The Court replied:

"We most heartily disagree. The congressional statement of purpose makes clear that the main function of the Amtrak Act was to preserve and improve train service. The object of the Legislation was not just trains, but the people who ride them.

"The private civil action, involving injured individuals acting as private Attorneys General, is becoming an accepted method of policy enforcement. Not only is it an accepted method, but it is one that the courts have an interest in encouraging. The judicial process works best when those with a direct stake in the outcome participate."

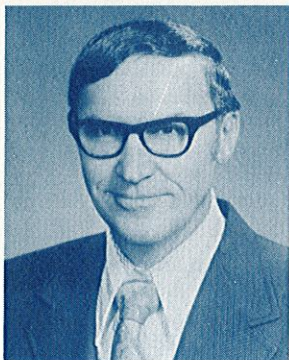
Litigation on the merits of the case will be held in abeyance pending the decision by the Supreme Court on the procedural question of "the people's right to sue."

Meanwhile, the public continues to be wrongfully deprived of service between Atlanta and Savannah.

NARP Has New Executive Director

New executive director of NARP is Robert J. (Bob) Casey, former public relations director of Westinghouse Air Brake Co. (WABCO) in Pittsburgh.

The appointment was announced Feb. 15 by NARP Chairman Anthony Haswell. Casey succeeds Joseph Vranich, who recently joined the staff of Amtrak as senior economic analyst.



Mr. Casey, who is also chairman of the board of Morristown Bank, Morristown, Ohio, at one time served as director of corporate identity of PPG Industries, Inc. He was administrative chairman of the Fourth International Conference on Urban Transportation, held in Pittsburgh several years ago.

He started his career as a reporter on the staff of the Youngstown, Ohio, Vindicator. Mr. Casey is former president of the Pittsburgh Chapter of Sigma Delta Chi professional journalistic society and a member of the Public Relations Society of America, Pittsburgh and Washington Chapters.

Harlem Valley Association Wins Case

Milt Machlin, HVTA member, reacting to "intolerable conditions," refused to pay his fare on a Harlem Division train and was arrested. Aided by the HVTA, Machlin won his case, establishing a precedent that the railroad has a legal obligation to provide decent service. Mrs. Gerald Carson is president of the HVTA. She suggests an eastern seaboard coalition of transportation groups to seek better treatment by government.

Austin Transit System Proposed

The Austin Committee for Public Transportation has proposed creation of a 19-mile high speed rail line, which would be the initial segment of a regional transportation system which would eventually serve Georgetown, San Marcos, Manor, Bastrop, Cedar Park and other communities in the Austin Area. The initial route would run underground through Austin's Central Area and connect to suburban areas by using existing railroad corridors. Initial ridership is projected at 40,000 to 50,000 daily, more than double all present city transit ridership. The Committee believes the new transit line would take more than 30,000 cars off Austin's crowded streets. NARP member Lyndon Henry is chairman of the Austin committee.

Baltimore-Washington Commuters Protest

A group of riders on Train 150 from Washington to Baltimore have petitioned U.S. Senator Charles McC. Mathias, seeking the Senator's help in establishing "adequate B&O/C&O commuter service from Washington to Baltimore". The petitioners claim that Train 150 has repeatedly provided poor service, due to unserviceable equipment and inadequate track maintenance. "The frequency of unsatisfactory service is such as to cause considerable hardships," according to J. E. Page, College Park, Maryland, chairman of the petitioning group.

Arkansas Seeks Rail Passenger Service

Through full page newspaper advertisements and news stories carried in newspapers, and on TV and radio stations, the Arkansas Chapter of NARP has encouraged Arkansans to shower letters on President Nixon, U.S. Senator John McClellan and Congressman Wilbur Mills to seek Amtrak rail passenger service for Arkansas.

John A. Mills, Arkansas chairman of NARP, wants President Nixon to release impounded funds for Amtrak, so that the National Rail Passenger Corp. can provide service to Arkansas.

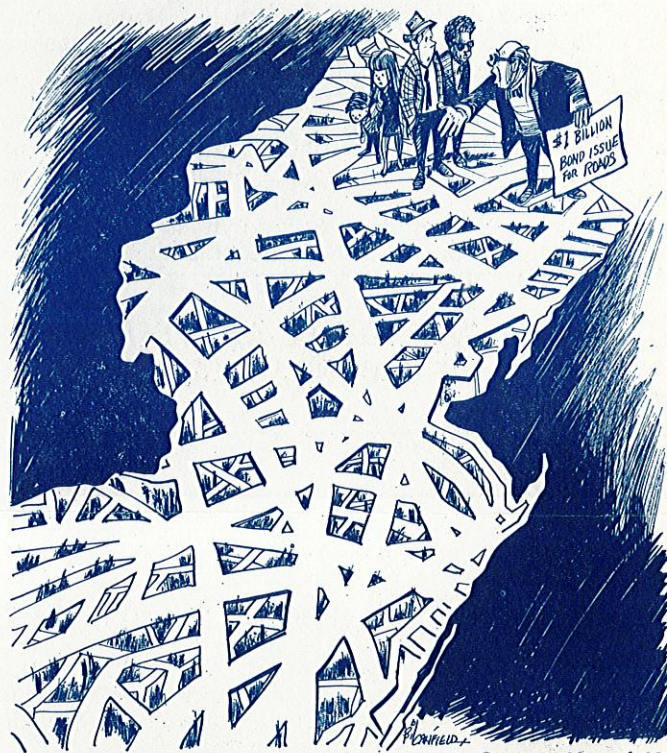
"Arkansas is the only state in the South — and one of the few in the nation — now lacking any rail passenger service," Mr. Mills stated.

Rhode Island NARP Association Seeks Two New Amtrak Stops

The newly-formed Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers has requested Amtrak to schedule stops in Kingston and Westerly for Train 169. The chapter also wants improved station facilities at South Kingstown. John Zeuch is chairman and Barry Schiller is secretary of the group. The officers were authorized to write to President Nixon to protest reported cut-backs in the Amtrak budget.

"Future transit investment has the same significance to national and regional economic and social development as the Interstate Highway Program and should be funded on the same 90% Federal-10% local basis as interstate highways, rather than the present 2/3 Federal - 1/3 local,"... Chairman William J. Ronan of MTA.

"But Look — There's Still Some Green Showing"



Courtesy Newark News

New York State Council Formed

A state-wide organization has been formed in New York to further cooperation of local groups for better public transportation. Mrs. Gerald Carson of Millerton, N.Y. 12456, co-chairman, said the group believes in preservation of existing rail facilities through government purchase or lease; top priority and funding for improved rail passenger service including subways and other rail rapid transit, commuter and inter-city rail service.

Mrs. Carson said the group wants a moratorium on new highway and airport construction and studies on alternatives to automobile transportation.

AMTRAK NEWS ROUNDUP

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Amtrak has announced a standard nationwide baggage policy — the first such rail policy to apply evenly across the nation — has gone into effect.

Principal features of the new policy are:

- Service charges for checking of baggage are cancelled.
- A limit of three pieces of free checked baggage per adult, two per child, and five per family-plan ticket.
- Excess weight charges will be based on coach, instead of first class, fares.

The free baggage allowance for checked baggage is 150 pounds for each adult and 75 pounds per child paying half fare. On family-plan tickets, the free allowance is 300 pounds per family.

Checked baggage will be forwarded on the same train the passenger is using whenever possible. However, when a train does not have a baggage car, baggage will be shipped on the next train which does.

Amtrak urges passengers to deliver baggage to the checking office reasonably in advance of train departure. A half-hour is usually sufficient time although earlier check-in is advised in vacation and other peak travel periods.

Once a passenger has purchased his ticket, he may check his baggage as far in advance of his own departure as he desires. On arrival, baggage will be held free for 72 hours. After that time, a moderate charge will be made for storage.

Checked baggage in excess of the free allowance will be charged at a rate of one-third the one-way coach fare per hundred pounds.

Amtrak also announced restoration of first-class fares for sleeping car passengers, effective January 8, on all trains operated by the Santa Fe. (The Santa Fe had adopted a policy of honoring coach tickets in sleeping cars on Sept. 1, 1970, eight months before Amtrak took over its passenger service.)

The change means that sleeping car passengers on the *Super Chief* and *Texas Chief* now are again required to pay a first-class fare — rather than the former coach fare — plus their room charge. The change puts travelers on Santa Fe operated trains on the same basis as the rest of the Amtrak system.

Amtrak Needs Complete Marketing Plan

The Gallagher Report, a newsletter for marketing, sales, advertising and media executives, says Amtrak needs a comprehensive marketing plan "to include product improvement, merchandising, advertising, public relations over next five years." GR

Support NARP — Bring In A New Member

Yes, I want to aid the cause of better rail passenger service. I understand I will receive a membership card and a monthly newsletter to keep me informed of developments.

Enclosed is my remittance for the category checked. I understand that \$3.00 of this amount is for a one-year subscription to the newsletter.

Contributing \$10
 Participating \$25

Sponsoring \$50
 Sustaining \$100
 Life, \$500 or more

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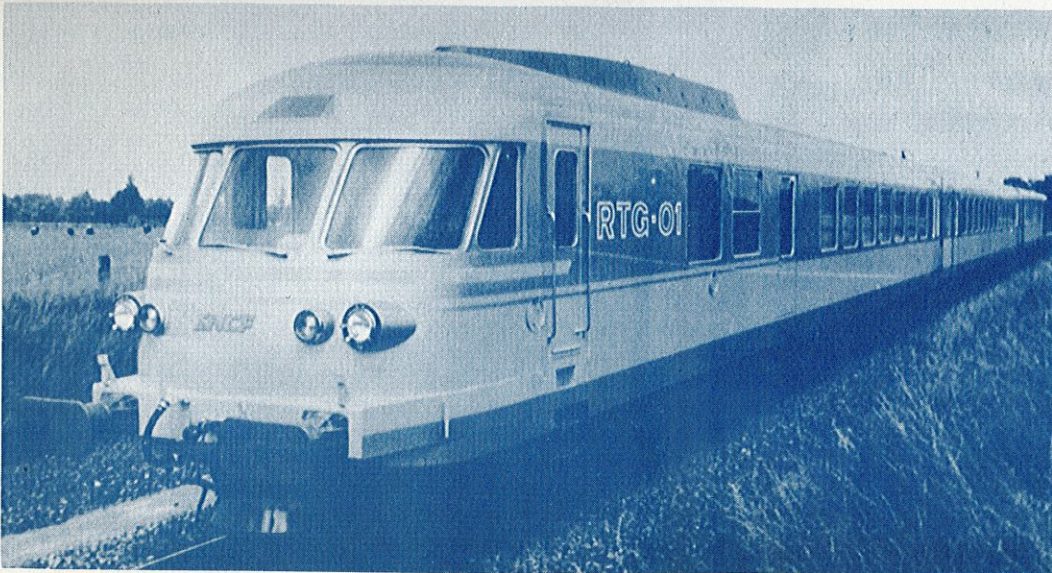
State _____ Zip _____

(NARP members should not use this form to renew. It would be helpful if members wait until they receive the coded renewal reminder.)

recommends three-step program for Amtrak President Roger Lewis: 1) Convince Congress to finance improvement of right-of-way (tracks to sustain 110-miles-per-hour speed) along main routes. Effort to be assisted by advertising, p.r. program to equate railroad's right-of-way with publicly maintained highways, airports. 2) Refurbish equipment. More problem of maintenance than replacement. Appoint Amtrak ombudsman with authority to enforce changes in response to riders' complaints. Publicize improvements as they are completed (not before). 3) Launch major merchandising campaign to sell rail travel as "cruises on wheels." Capitalize on luxuries airlines can't provide: nurseries, discoteques, beauty salons, gyms as well as bigger baggage allowances, dining cars, staterooms, sleepers.

Engineers Protest Bad Amtrak Service

The New York State Legislative Board of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has protested Amtrak's poor performance and service in the Empire State. On the New York to Buffalo run, elapsed time since Amtrak started has increased by 50 minutes; equipment is old, with no dining cars or service; stations are undesirable; advertising does not tell how to reach stations; schedules are inadequate or unrealistic. "We are extremely fearful that because of the character and type of service offered, it is only a question of time before all passenger service is abandoned," says Homer E. Peters, attorney for the brotherhood. "Local management of Amtrak is totally unqualified to direct or manage what little service there is," he added. Attorney Peters can be contacted at State Bank Building, Albany, N.Y.



Amtrak has ordered two of these 125 mph., 304-passenger turbine-powered trains under a lease agreement with the French manufacturer, ANF-Frangeco. Amtrak has an option to buy these and up to eight more at approximately the same price of \$2.2 million each. The two French-built trains will go into operation next summer between Chicago and St. Louis and Milwaukee and Chicago, along with two similar trains built by the United Aircraft Corporation.

TRAIN OF TOMORROW AT THE GOLDEN GATE

By Anthony Haswell
Chairman NARP

Last December, I had the privilege of riding the new Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) service on the initial route between Oakland and Fremont, California.

In comparison with other transit operations in the U.S., with the possible exception of the Philadelphia-Lindenwold (NJ) line, BART is light years ahead.

80 mph between stops. Smooth as silk. Quiet. Carpeted floors, no straphangers, audible PA system. Beautiful stations. All in all, a joy to ride.

With all these superlatives, one would think that San Francisco Bay Area residents would be ecstatic.

They aren't.

Almost every day, a Bay Area newspaper carries a story about how the sophisticated electronic control system is not functioning, how these troubles will delay the beginning of full service under San Francisco Bay, and how much the taxpayers have committed to this huge project without yet receiving any benefits.

No doubt, these problems will cost yet more money to solve. Maybe some heads should roll. And surely the commencement of

BART began passenger service between Oakland and Richmond Jan. 29, bringing into operation the entire north-south half of the 75-mile X-shaped system. The new service extends BART's operating system to 39 miles and 18 stations between Fremont in the South and Richmond in the North. The east-west half will open in two stages this year.

high frequency operation must await a solution, for public confidence in the operational safety of the system is imperative.

The BART management could help itself a little by soft-pedaling talk of expansion, at least till things are running well on what they have now. In particular, it seems foolish to spend \$900 million for a BART line down the San Francisco peninsula when Southern Pacific commuter service can be modernized for less than \$100 million.

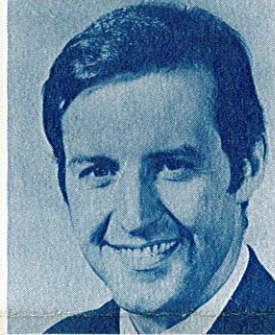
Nevertheless, Bay Area opinion leaders should adopt a more positive mental attitude towards BART at this critical period of its existence. And everyone should go to Oakland and ride the trains. For then they will know what tomorrow on rails will really be like. And when today's troubles are history, they will be quickly forgotten.

FRIENDS OF THE RAILROAD PASSENGER

Congressman Alan Steelman

Newest friend of the railroad passenger in Congress is the lower house's youngest Republican, Congressman Alan Steelman, age 30.

Cong. Steelman has immediately brought attention to the need for modern rail transportation in Texas, and has successfully urged Amtrak to re-route the *Texas Chief* between Dallas and Houston. The new route will be the Texas and Pacific between Fort Worth and Dallas, and Southern Pacific between Dallas and Houston. The Amtrak board has voted in favor of this change, effective June 10. According to its proponents, the change will strengthen ridership due to inclusion of Dallas, will permit a faster schedule, and will provide service into the Southern Pacific station in Houston.



Mr. Steelman served as executive director of the President's Advisory Council on Minority Business Enterprise in Washington, D.C. from September, 1969 until he resigned to become a congressional candidate in January, 1972. While in Washington he also served as a member of the Special White House Speakers Task Force on Phases I and II of the administration's economic program.

Born March 15, 1942 in Little Rock, Ark., he grew up in Fordyce and Arkadelphia, Arkansas where he attended public school. Mr. Steelman was graduated from Baylor University in 1964 with a B.A. in political science and from Southern Methodist University in 1971 with a Master of Liberal Arts. He is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, political science honor society.

Mr. Steelman has long been interested in politics and government. His uncle, John R. Steelman, was Assistant to President Harry S Truman.

Amtrak is hiring "40 energetic people" to perform all on-board services on the *Montrealer & Washingtonian*. Amtrak is hiring its own people to replace the PC crews whom that railroad agreed to supply until Feb. 15 or thereabouts to staff the whole train even though it ran mostly on non-PC tracks. A "Train Service Supervisor" will be in charge of each train's service crew.

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